

Death: More Than Just an Individual's Life Being Taken Away

Abu 'Abdir-Rahman Navaid Aziz

All praise is due to Allaah, who reminds His slaves that their lives have an appointed time and that the successful ones are those who are saved from the fire and entered into paradise, when He says:

"Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception." [3:185]

And reminds them that death will reach them no matter where they are when He says:

"Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in fortresses built up strong and high!" [4:78]

And reminds them that regardless of what their status in this world, they will face death. Even if they are from the greatest of warriors, or the most powerful of rulers, or even a Prophet, when He addressed His messenger (Salla Allahu 'alaihi wa sallam) saying:

"Verily, you will die and indeed they shall die as well" [39:30]

And reminds them that they should take heed, because a time will come where they will ask for respite to do more deeds yet shall not be granted this request when He says:

"And spend of that with which We have provided you, before death comes to one of you and he says: 'My Lord! If only You would give me respite for a little while (i.e. return to the worldly life), then I should give Sadaqah (i.e. Zakât) of my wealth, and be among the righteous. And Allaah grants respite to none when his appointed time (death) comes. And Allaah is All-Aware of what you do.'" [63:10-11]

And I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship but He and may His Salaah and Salaam be upon the Prophet Mohammad, his companions and those who follow their way in righteousness until the last day.

Death is indeed a reality that we all have to face one day. For most of us we will have to go through mourned times over our lost loved ones before we actually face our own destiny. And at that time, even though we may not realize it, Allaah is bestowing a great favour upon us by reminding us that we too will one day face such a fate, so it is indeed time to be reminded.

Tonight Allaah -the most exalted- bestowed such a reminder upon me by taking away the life of my grandfather (may Allaah encompass him with His infinite mercy and blessing and protect him from the punishment of the grave and the hellfire. Aameen). As my mother (may Allaah protect her and increase her in righteousness. Aameen) broke the news to me I could feel the ground being taken from under me, just as it had recently been taken from under her, and it

was at that very moment that a sad reality hit me quite hard. Death is not just an individual's life being taken away but rather it is so much more. It is a wife

losing her husband, a child losing his father, a sister losing her brother, a grandchild losing his grandfather, one who was in need losing someone they would resort to, and the list goes on.

The only sadder reality than losing my grandfather (raheemahullah), was the fact that it took a close family member of mine to pass away before I realized the actual pain and anxiety that death causes. May Allaah forgive us for our heedlessness in not sympathizing and empathizing with our brothers and sisters who die and lose loved ones everyday. Aameen.

Even though it has just roughly been over two hours since I was informed of this great loss a lot of thoughts and reminders have crossed my mind which I feel are incumbent upon me to share with you today, in accordance to the statement of Allaah, The Most High:

"And remind, for indeed the reminder benefits the believer" [51:55]

Firstly: Never take your Islaam for granted by not sharing it with your family and friends. When Allaah blessed you with Islaam, He placed upon you a responsibility to convey its message to all of mankind. And from the crux of the message of Islaam is worshipping Allaah alone. For it is indeed this very crucial element that is the criterion between entering paradise or not. As Allaah, The Most High says:

"Verily, Allaah does not forgive that partners should be set up with him in worship, but He forgives all except that to whom He pleases, and whosoever sets up rivals with Allaah in worship, has indeed committed a tremendous sin." [4:48]

So which one of us, with the slightest bit of faith and true love, would want to see one of our beloved prevented from paradise?

Secondly: Know, that by having come into this world Allaah created a bond between you and your parents that no one can ever take away. And has placed upon you a responsibility that should not be taken lightly at the very least.

After having spoken to my mother (hafidhahaa Allaah), I longed from the bottom of my heart and the depths of my soul to be there with her, comfort her, and take care of her every want and need. But due to my currently being overseas, I must live with the guilt of not being able to have been there for her in her time of need. May Allaah forgive all of us for our shortcomings. Aameen.

As for those of you who have your parents alive and close by, I advise you as a well wisher to be as righteous towards them as possible, lest that you are ever away from them in a time of need, you will not be burdened with the guilt that you did not do your best while you were able to.

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small.'" [17:23-24]

Lastly: Do not be insensitive or inconsiderate of people. I know that the statement is very vague and ambiguous, but I believe it is its ambiguity and vagueness that makes it all the more powerful.

Approximately two minutes after I felt the ground was being taken from under me a close friend of mine (Ghafara Allaahu lahu) called and jokingly said: "Do you have a disease that prevents you from answering text messages!?" At that very moment I was just awestruck and at an absolute loss of words to say the very least. Even though I do not blame him for not knowing of my particular situation, I do feel it is very sad that we often fail to realize that someone may be going through hardship and not even attempt to give them the benefit of the doubt. What I find even sadder in this situation is how having lost a grandfather to many illnesses and diseases, that we as conscious individuals, can joke, jest, and belittle any sickness or disease. May Allaah forgive us for what our surroundings have made of us. Aameen.

On a more pertinent note, when people lose loved ones they need the love and support of people around them to get over it. One of the best ways to do this is to just be there to talk to them in the initial stages of the shock, and as time goes on try to get them to re-adjust to their regular routines and daily lives. One of the biggest mistakes that people, who want to do good, can make is to bring up the topic of a lost one when the family of the deceased have just begun to get over them. A loss of a loved one is like an open wound, it needs time and care to heal, so do be careful not to pour salt where it will only harm.

Indeed, the reminders found in death are many and thus some of our predecessors would suffice by just saying the word "death" in their Friday sermons. So I hope the few reminders I extracted were beneficial, foremostly to myself. As like all other reminders if there is no physical implementation in regards to what is said, then its presence is just as good as its absence, and I pray to Allaah that this is not the case.

May Allaah have mercy upon all of the deceased of the Muslims. May He grant them firmness in answering. May He widen their graves and fill them with light and many pleasures. May he protect them from any punishment and harm in the grave or in the hellfire. May He enter them into the highest of paradise in the companionship of the prophets, martyrs, truthful ones, and the righteous. May He make the deaths of the deceased a lesson for those they have left behind. May He grant comfort, solace, and firmness to those they have left behind, and may He replace all of their sorrows and dismays with unlimited pleasure and joy in this life and the next. Aameen. Aameen. Aameen.

"Their call therein will be, 'Exalted are You, O Allah' and their greeting therein will be, 'Peace.' And the last of their call will be, 'Praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds!' "[10:10]

Was salaam 'alaikum wa rahamatullahi wa barakaatuhu
Abu 'Abdir-Rahman Navaid Aziz
Al- Madeenah An-Nabaweyyah
The night of the 17th of Safar 1428